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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by Research Institute for Enhancing Women's Lives, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

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Statement

Childhood is the most significant and sensitive period of human life. It forms both mental and physical characteristics of each individual and shapes their attitudes and worldviews. Childhood lays the foundation of our future. Child girl, in particular, needs a more urgent attention, because they have been the victim of discrimination and violence for a longer period of human history.

Fortunately, in recent decades world community has paid greater attention to the rights and needs of children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a solid ground to promote the rights of child and protect them from violence and discrimination as indispensable obligations of all states parties. With regard to the girl child, the Beijing Platform for Action put special emphasis on concrete measures to increase public awareness and to eliminate discrimination in education, health and nutrition as well as physical training. In addition, it strives to develop new opportunities for advancement of the girl-child. The decision of the Commission on the Status of Women to choose "the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against girl child" as its priority theme for its fifty-first session reflects the urgency and necessity of the matter.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and has incorporated the Strategic Objectives of Beijing Platform for Action in its Fourth National Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan to promote and protect the rights of girl child. To this end it has put emphasis on deprived regions and rural areas to make sure that all girls have equal opportunity for free education as well as public health services. Equal access to nutrition, mental and emotional and reproductive health is of outmost importance particularly for vulnerable girls. Government and civil society organizations have designed programmes for a better understanding of family planning, improving reproductive and sexual health, and reducing girls' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other STDs. Special attention has been paid for protecting girls at home and society against violence in all its forms, discrimination, negligence, forced labor, sexual abuse and trafficking. Despite such measures there are inadequacies in all fields and a coordinated action plan is necessary to be implemented by government and NGOs in all levels of society, particularly in deprived areas and for poor and vulnerable families.

RIWL as a non-profit non-governmental organization advocates women's equal access to health, education and employment. It also strives to empower women against gender-based violence, social discrimination and socio-psychological harm. It has taken MDG as its priority and has particularly focused on goals 3, 4, 5 & 6.

It has also adopted life skills to address a variety of issues threatening the heath and well being of children and youth. Life skills may include: a-interpersonal skills such as communication, empathy and refusal; b- cognitive skills such as decision making and critical thinking; c- emotional coping such as stress management. In this context, for the last three years, this institute has held thousands of workshops for children, adolescent, youth and even parents. In all programs special attention has been paid to girls and women.

Finally, it is imperative to develop a global mechanism or fund to promote girls' mental and physical heath as well as to protect them from discrimination and violence. To this end, it is advisable to include life skills for girls in all level of school programs.